

18 participants is retrieved as a final retrieval result; and
19 outputting said final retrieval result indicating the designated idle time
G2
20 common to all participants in said selected groups of participants.

REMARKS

Claims 10-20 are pending in this application.

The Examiner's several courtesies extended to the Applicants' representative during the in-person Office Interview conducted on Monday, February 3, 2003, and subsequent telephonic conversation conducted on Tuesday February 11, 2003 are noted with appreciation.

Pursuant to the agreement reached with the Examiner, Nga Nguyen, as evidenced in the Examiner Interview Summary Record, each of independent claims 10-14 have been amended in several particulars for purposes of clarity and brevity that are unrelated to patentability and prior art rejections in accordance with current Office policy, to clearly define Applicants' disclosed invention over the cited prior art references, including Hirotaka JP 8106439 and the newly cited, Cree et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,093,901, and to place the instant application in condition for allowance.

Specifically, in the Examiner Interview Summary Record dated on February 3, 2003, the Examiner acknowledges that,

Neither references [Hirotaka JP 8106439 and the newly cited, Cree et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,093,901] teaches "dividing **schedules of participants into groups** according to a degree of significance." However, independent claims 10-14 need to be amended to clarify this feature to distinguish over the prior art.

Proposed amendments to claims 10-20 will be submitted for the Examiner's consideration and entry to overcome the prior art rejection.

In view of this agreement, as well as the agreement reached during the

telephone conversation with the Examiner on Tuesday, February 11, 2003, independent system claims 10 and 11 have been amended, for example, to “divide[s] schedules of participants and equipments into different groups according to a degree of significance” [see claims 10 and 11] and that the user can “request an idle time retrieval from said schedule server from different groups of schedules of said participants and/or equipments according to said degree of significance so as to retrieve the idle time corresponding to said degree of significance among said different groups” [see claim 11]. As amended, system claims 10 and 11 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Likewise, method claim 12 and Beauregard claim 14 have been amended, pursuant to the agreement reached during the telephone conversation with Examiner, Nga Nguyen, on Tuesday, February 11, 2003, to set forth in the preamble the relationship between a schedule server in connection with remote client devices, and to clarify how the schedules of participants in different groups are stored in memory of the schedule server, and how a user from one of remote client devices is able to select one or more groups of participants and to request retrieval of a designated idle time common to selected groups of participants from the schedule server such that a retrieval result of an idle time common to participants obtained in one of said selected groups of participants is used as a retrieval condition for retrieving an idle time common to all participants in another one of said selected groups of participants until the designated idle time common to participants in all of said selected groups of participants is retrieved as a final retrieval result. As amended, claims 12 and 14 are also believed to be in condition for allowance since none of these features is defined in the cited prior art references, including Hirotaka

JP 8106439 and the newly cited, Cree et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,093,901.

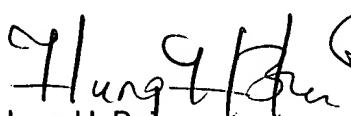
As a result, entry of this Supplement Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b) because those amendments simply place the instant application in condition for allowance as agreed between the Applicants' representative and the Examiner during the Interview conducted on February 3, 2003.

In view of the foregoing additions and remarks, all claims 10-20 are deemed in condition for allowance. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at (703) 312-6600.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (500.35669CX1).

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

Respectfully submitted,
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 10-14, as follows:

1 **10. (Thrice Amended)** A schedule management system, comprising:
2 a schedule server which stores schedules of participants and schedules of
3 equipments reserved by ones of said participants, and which divides schedules of
4 participants and/or equipments into in-different groups according to a degree of
5 significance; and
6 a plurality of remote client devices operatively connected to said schedule
7 server, which allow client users to input schedules of said participants and/or
8 equipments and request an idle time retrieval from said schedule server, wherein a
9 degree of significance is provided to said participants respectively so that from
10 different groups of schedules of said participants and/or equipments according are
11 grouped in the order of to said degree of significance so as to thereby retrieve the
12 idle time corresponding to said degree of significance among said different groups.

1 **11. (Twice Amended)** A schedule management system, comprising:
2 a schedule server which stores schedules of participants and schedules of
3 equipments reserved by ones of said participants in different groups; and
4 a plurality of remote client devices operatively connected to said schedule

5 server, which allow client users to input schedules of said participants and
6 equipments, and request an idle time retrieval from said schedule server,
7 wherein said schedule server comprises one or more databases which store
8 schedules of participants and schedules of equipments reserved by ones of said
9 participants, and a multistageous idle time retrieval unit which divides schedules
10 registered for participants and equipments into a plurality of groups according to a
11 degree of significance and retrieves an idle time common from one group as a
12 retrieval condition for retrieving an idle time common for another group of said
13 plurality of groups.

1 **12. (Twice Amended)** A schedule retrieval method for retrieving a
2 schedulemanaging schedules of participants in a schedule server in connection with
3 remote client devices, -comprising:
4 storing schedules of participants in different groups in memory of the
5 schedule server;
6 enabling a user from one of remote client devices to select one or more
7 groups of participants and to request retrieval of a designated idle time common to
8 selected groups of participants from the schedule server;
9 accepting the user's request as a first conference holdingretrieval condition
10 for retrieving the designated idle time common to all participants in said selected
11 groups of participants of said schedule;
12 obtaining a retrieval result of an idle time common to participants in one of
13 said selected groups of participants;
14 using the retrieval result of an idle time common to participants in said one of

15 said selected groups of participants as a retrieval condition for retrieving an idle time
16 common to all participants in another one of said selected groups of participants
17 until the designated idle time common to participants in all of said selected groups of
18 participants is retrieved as a final retrieval result; and
19 dividing a subject of said schedule into a plurality of groups;
20 comparing one group in said plurality of groups obtained by division
21 with said first conference holding condition to make a coincident result
22 be a second
23 conference holding condition;
24 comparing one of said plurality of groups, which is not yet compared
25 with any previous conference holding conditions, with said second
26 conference holding condition to obtain a retrieval result; and
27 outputting said final retrieval result obtained indicating the designated idle
28 time common to all participants in said selected groups of participants.

1 **13. (Twice Amended)** A schedule server apparatus coupled to terminal
2 apparatuses allocated to schedule-reserving persons and schedule-reserved
3 persons through a communication line for retrieving idle time of a schedule,
4 comprising:
5 communication control means for transmitting data to said terminal
6 apparatuses and for receiving data from said terminal apparatuses; and
7 retrieving means for dividing each of schedules registered for a plurality of
8 participants and/or a plurality of equipments into a plurality of groups according to a
9 degree of significance and retrieving common idle time among said plurality of

10 groups while taking according to said degree of significance of respective groups of
11 participants and/or equipments into account.

1 **14. (Twice Amended)** A computer readable medium comprising
2 instructions for retrieving idle time of a schedule that, when executed by a
3 ~~computer~~ ~~schedule server in connection with remote client devices~~-system, perform
4 the method comprising:
5 storing schedules of participants in different groups in memory of the
6 schedule server;
7 enabling a user from one of remote client devices to select one or more
8 groups of participants and to request retrieval of a designated idle time common to
9 selected groups of participants from the schedule server;
10 accepting the user's request as a first conference holding retrieval condition
11 for retrieving the designated idle time common to all participants in said selected
12 groups of participants of said schedule;
13 obtaining a retrieval result of an idle time common to participants in one of
14 said selected groups of participants;
15 using the retrieval result of an idle time common to participants in said one of
16 said selected groups of participants as a retrieval condition for retrieving an idle time
17 common to all participants in another one of said selected groups of participants
18 until the designated idle time common to participants in all of said selected groups of
19 participants is retrieved as a final retrieval result; and
20 dividing a subject of said schedule into a plurality of groups;
21 comparing one group in said plurality of groups obtained by division

22 —— with said first conference holding condition to make a coincident result
23 be a second
24 —— conference holding condition;
25 comparing one of said plurality of groups, which is not yet compared
26 with any previous conference holding conditions, with said second
27 conference holding condition; and
28 outputting a said final retrieval result obtained by comparison indicating the
29 designated idle time common to all participants in said selected groups of
30 participants.